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Manpower For Mobilization

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One of the most important and complex issues confronting the Department of Defense today is that of manpower mobilization. While it may not appear to some to be a resource allocation issue in the same way that force level and structure decisions are, I believe that it is a resource allocation problem par excellence. As such it merits, and I hope will receive, increasing attention from the community of people who work on problems of this kind.

Like any complicated system, the fabric of the defense mobilization manpower system is woven from many different threads. Misunderstandings sometimes result when individuals pull one of the mobilization manpower threads and examine it out of context.

I would like to discuss the defense mobilization manpower fabric as a whole. I will begin by examining the Selective Service System and the much-publicized issue of peacetime registration. I will then attempt to place the registration issue in context with some of our other mobilization manpower concerns. These concerns include manning levels of our active and Reserve forces and the adequacy of our pools of other trained manpower.

During war, the DoD manpower requirements will not only be large, but the buildup will take place at unprecedented rates. In addition to the people who are in our active and Reserve force units, we will need to recall trained people to bring early deploying units to wartime strength and to replace casualties. We will also need to begin training additional people to fill later-deploying units and as casualty replacements, and to form new force units, if necessary. We do not expect this wartime requirement to be met solely by volunteers. We must plan to accept and train a large number of conscripts. Consequently, we have asked the Selective Service System to be prepared to start delivery of inductees within 30 days after a decision to mobilize is made, and to provide 100,000 inductees within 60 days.

We will not need inductees sooner than 30 days because we have other sources of manpower to fill the training bases for this period. Not commonly known is that DoD has, on the average, about 80,000 active military members who have contracted to enlist at a future date but have not yet started their training. The Reserve Components have about 15,000 in the same situation. Their entry on active duty will be accelerated except for those who must complete school. Large numbers of volunteers are likely, but our manpower plans do not depend on large numbers. We also will need to conduct refresher training for some people and retrain others in skills more critical to our needs. These dramatic increases in training loads will be more than enough to keep the training bases full during the first month after mobilization.

Peacetime Registration. Our mobilization requirement for inductees has led to considerable debate within DoD and in both Houses of Congress concerning how to provide the Selective Service System with the capability to respond. The most publicized proposal has been the reinstatement of peacetime registration—a proposal now being considered by the Congress.

The Administration position on this issue is straightforward: we should return to peacetime registration if, but only if, standby mechanisms cannot meet the nation's mobilization needs. We believe that at the present time there is not sufficient evidence to reject the hypothesis that standby mechanisms can be made to work. In addition, there is no need to mandate peacetime registration since the President already has the authority, in the Selective Service Act, to resume registration if he believes it is necessary to maintain national security.

The arguments presented in favor of registration have focused on military preparedness. In this regard, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, all of whom share our concern about manpower needs in a fast-breaking

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Based on remarks by the Honorable Robert B. Pirie, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) to the Economics and National Security Conference, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado, August 15, 1979.

war, believe that only a peacetime registration scheme can provide adequate assurance that recruits will be available quickly enough and in adequate numbers. However, I continue to believe that it is possible to meet the Department's mobilization requirements for inductees without peacetime registration.

Several studies—not only in the Executive Branch but also by the Congressional Budget Office and the General Accounting Office—have concluded that adequately funded, carefully planned Selective Service standby mechanisms could meet our mobilization manpower requirements on the schedule we have set out.

Meeting Mobilization Demands. The work to be done is a revitalization of an almost defunct Selective Service System. The Department of Defense is concerned that the Selective Service System cannot currently meet our 30-day requirement for emergency inductions. That circumstance does not, however, lead to the conclusion that peacetime registration is the only way to correct

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Selective Service deficiencies. We believe that a less drastic, less costly and lower risk alternative should be attempted first. The Administration has requested the resources to support such an option—an option that would revitalize the Selective Service System. These funds will be used to improve computer equipment and programs, to increase staffing, to improve emergency planning for post-mobilization registration and induction and to improve training of the headquarters staff and field offices.

The objective is to provide the Selective Service System with the capability to meet our most demanding mobilization manpower requirement. The Acting Director of the Selective Service System has repeatedly testified that he is confident that the Selective Service System can develop the capability to meet this requirement without peacetime registration—if Congress provides adequate funds.

Many of those who advocate peacetime registration believe that the planned schedule is unduly optimistic, even with improvements to the Selective Service System. They argue that the sequence of individual registration, data reduction, random selection by lottery, notification and examination cannot be accomplished in 30 days, particularly when the country would be fully involved in other war-related activities. However, in 1917, the nation conducted a registration 18 days after enabling legislation was passed. In 1940, we conducted a registration within 30 days. We believe it is reasonable to expect that we could do better in the future, provided that we make use of modern technology and plan prudently.

We believe, therefore, that the Congress should approve the Administration's request for funds to improve the Selective Service System rather than mandate registration. We also believe that once Selective Service computer resources, staffing and planning have been enhanced, their capability should be periodically tested to provide confidence that the system will work. If these tests demonstrate that the Selective Service System cannot meet our requirements, the Secretary of Defense will not hesitate to recommend that the President order a peacetime registration under the authority he now possesses.

To put the matter concisely, I view registration as a reasonable claim on our citizenry if it is necessary, and—equally—as an unreasonable demand if it is not necessary.

To this point I have been discussing but one strand in the fabric of mobilization manpower. The quality of the whole cloth is a function of the strength of all its threads—from active military manpower to the untrained draftee. I would like to discuss the remaining important mobilization manpower issues and how we in DoD, with the help of the Congress, are handling them.

Our mobilization manpower plans assume there will be very little warning time. Under these circumstances, our most important mobilization manpower assets will be those who are already trained. Since 13 weeks of training are re-

quired by law before individuals may be deployed, we cannot depend on draftees for help in the first few months, no matter how quickly inducted.

Our active force of 2.1 million would bear the initial burden of a fast-breaking war. Since 1973, the United States has manned its active forces without resorting to conscription. So bold an initiative as moving from a force largely composed of draftees to a force composed entirely of volunteers inevitably—and rightly—inspires debate and warrants continued review and appraisal. We welcome debate on this vital issue. However, much of the debate has been oversimplistic.

All-Volunteer Force. Some people are sure that the all-volunteer force is a huge success. Others are equally certain that the all-volunteer force is a dismal failure.

Rather than adopting either of these views, I find it preferable to identify our specific manpower supply problems and assess the costs and benefits of alternative solutions.

When the all-volunteer force was originally being debated, the main concern was our ability to keep the ranks of the active forces filled and the units ready. Thus far, we have generally been successful in meeting our recruiting goals for the active forces. Since 1973, we have never been more than one and one-half percent below our authorized strength.

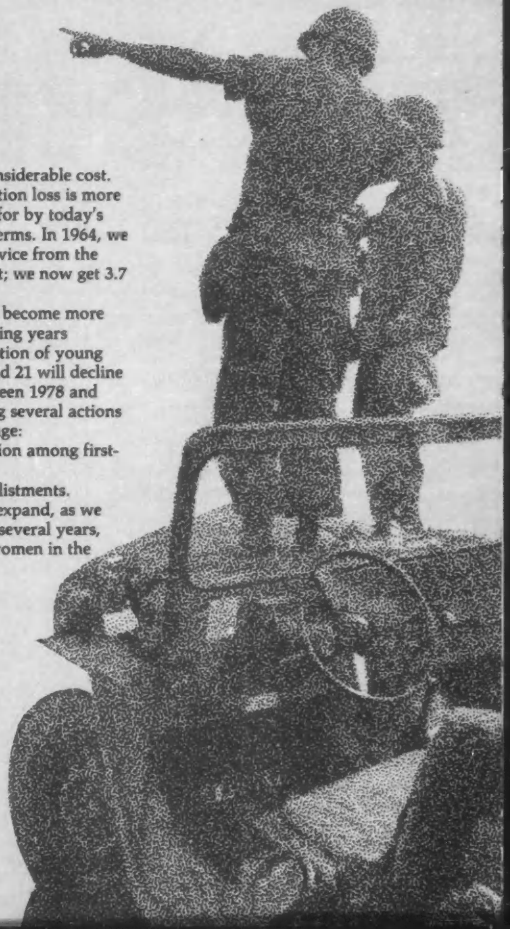
The quality of our recruits—that is, their ability and willingness to learn military skills and to perform successfully as members of military units—is equally as important as the number of recruits.

By the standards of assessment we use, the quality of enlisted recruits under the all-volunteer force has been roughly compared to what we experienced in the pre-Vietnam draft era. We get fewer college graduates; on the other hand, we take proportionately fewer people who are below average.

Attrition rates for first-term enlistees are higher than we would like them to be. That is, too many recruits are discharged from the service without completing their enlistments, mostly because of lack of aptitude, motivation, or discipline. This requires us to recruit and train replacements at considerable cost. However, this attrition loss is more than compensated for by today's longer enlistment terms. In 1964, we got 3.1 years of service from the average new recruit; we now get 3.7 years.

Recruitment will become more difficult in the coming years because the population of young men between 17 and 21 will decline by 15 percent between 1978 and 1987. We are taking several actions to meet this challenge:

- Reducing attrition among first-term enlistees.
- Increasing reenlistments.
- Continuing to expand, as we have over the past several years, opportunities for women in the Services.



"The programs are beginning to work. The long decline has been arrested..."

There is no guarantee that these actions will be fully successful in keeping our active forces up to strength. It is certainly conceivable that at some point in the future we may have to resort to the draft. However, I don't look upon the draft as an all-purpose solution to our problem.

- Draftees serve shorter terms of service than volunteers. This lowers the experience level of the force at a time when new weapons systems demand more experienced people. Shorter enlistment terms also force us to divert more resources to training new recruits.
- The draft—if it is truly representative—may result in taking in a greater proportion of people of below-average aptitude.
- While we have disciplinary problems today, there are fewer than we experienced in the last years of the draft. There is no assurance that drafted servicemembers, serving involuntarily, will be more amenable to military discipline.

Moreover, returning to the draft would probably not produce the significant savings that some expect. It is unlikely that the nation would be willing to pay draftees less than we pay volunteers. The dollars saved in eliminating enlistment bonuses and reducing the recruiting forces would be mostly offset by greater training expenditures.

In summary, the AVF has worked reasonably well in the active force, but it faces challenges in the years ahead as the youth population declines.

Reserve Forces. The Reserve Components have fared less well following the introduction of the all-volunteer force. Defense policies and programs in the past six years have asked the Reserves to shoulder more of the nation's military burden. But we have seen a decline in the Reserve strength in that period, particularly in the Army Guard and Reserve. As we changed from a country fighting a war with drafted soldiers to one at peace defended by a voluntary force, it was to be expected that the inclination of young men and women to join the Reserve forces would decrease. It was not expected that the decline in unit strength would be as long and as difficult to remedy as has been the case. Since the beginning of the all-volunteer force, the Army Reserve has dropped from nearly 235,000 to 187,600 personnel. Similarly, the Army National Guard fell from a strength of 406,000 to 345,100. Overall, the Army is nearly 130,000 enlisted personnel short of its peacetime objective for the Selected Reserve.

The other services have not experienced such a decline. Last year the Air Force achieved a 15-year high in Selected Reserve manning.

The Congress has demanded, and we must ensure, that this nation's Ready Reserve will be fully prepared in the event of a mobilization. To do that, DoD has established a comprehensive program to improve the total readiness of the National Guard and Reserve. That program is underway and will be expanded in 1980. For the Selected Reserve, a three part program to increase manning is underway.

The first part of that program centers on providing additional flexibility in enlistment alternatives. In the past the standard enlistment option for the Selected Reserve has been six years. We think a shorter initial enlistment period will attract more recruits. The Army has just been authorized to offer a three-year initial enlistment option in all units of the Army Guard and Reserve. The Army also is testing a two-year, active-duty enlistment option followed by four years in the Ready Reserve.

In addition to the various enlistment options, we are testing a split training program which permits enlistees to take basic training and advanced training at different times. For example, a college student who does not have time for a 12-week training period could split his/her training into two successive summers.

In the second part of the Selected Reserve strength program, we—following a lead initiated by the Congress—are offering enlistment bonuses in cash or in educational benefits. These programs are designed to attract people to fill

shortages in critical skills and, for the Army, to help man early deploying units. The reenlistment bonus, another initiative being accelerated, is an important factor in retaining experienced personnel.

The third part of the Selective Reserve strength program focuses on management improvements. There is now a full-time Reserve Component professional recruiting force of about 5,000 people. All recruiting functions for the Army Reserve are centrally managed by the Army's Recruiting Command. A centralized referral program, an automated system for accession management, and a system that recognizes outstanding recruiting performance round out the major management improvements.

These programs are beginning to work. The long decline in Army Guard and Reserve strength has been arrested and strength is now increasing.

In addition to the combat and support units provided by the Selected Reserves, we also need a pool of pretrained individuals who can flesh out our active and Reserve units and serve as replacements for early battlefield casualties. Our primary sources of pretrained individual manpower include members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), the Standby Reserve, and retired military personnel. We also consider as a source, individuals in the active or Reserve forces, such as recruiters, who are filling jobs that would not all be needed in wartime. We are concerned about the low level in the collective pool of pretrained individuals. We are beginning to make progress in filling it. We can solve this problem by a combination of increasing the IRR pool and taking better advantage of the talent in the retired population.

The IRR pool is now increasing in strength. Not only did we stop a

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major leakage from that pool but we will soon be putting into the IRR those who would have been administratively discharged before completion of their service obligation. Thus far, our management efforts have had considerable impact. The Army has increased its enlisted IRR pool from a low of 100,000 in early 1978 to 155,000 today. In addition to these types of management improvements affecting supply, we are testing enlistment and reenlistment programs for the IRR.

We are also examining proposals to increase the length of the Military Service Obligation from the current 6 years to either 7 or 8 years. Now an individual who completes 3 years of active duty is obligated to serve an additional 3 years in the IRR. An increase of that obligation by 2 years would give us an adequately sized IRR pool. We are also developing new techniques for notification and screening of the IRR in order to improve our expectations of the number who will report rapidly and be qualified to serve. Peacetime training is another factor under study.

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We are planning to use retirees in the event of mobilization, as we did in World War II and the Korean War. For example, there are about 150,000 Army retirees who left service within the last 10 years and are below age 60. By using retirees in support activities we can quickly free up young soldiers to join deploying units. The Army is now identifying its younger retirees and will be contacting them this fall with their mobilization assignments.

Our current shortfalls in mobilization manpower, mainly in the Army, have drawn much attention in the past year. Some have suggested peacetime registration as a solution. I think that suggestion is misguided for two basic reasons. First, the shortfall is not insurmountable—I have mentioned many new initiatives that are underway and are paying off now. We are well along the road to reversing the downward strength trends. Second, the shortfalls are in manpower sources that should be trained before moblization, not after. A trained draftee four months after moblization cannot fill a need that occurs at two months.

As you can surmise from my overview remarks, the fabric of mobilization manpower is worn in spots and is in good condition in others. It is being managed as a system. We are working hardest on the most important aspect of the program—increasing the supply of pretrained manpower which is needed in the first few months after mobilization.

The Administration is also committed to improving the capability of the Selective Service System. The President has nominated Bernard Rostker, now a Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower, as the new Director of the Selective Service System. That appointment, together with the Administration's commitment to revitalize the Selective Service System, gives me great encouragement for that aspect of mobilization manpower.

The rider on the Defense Authorization Bill that would have mandated peacetime registration of 18-year-old men beginning in January 1981 was defeated in the House of Representatives on September 14, 1979.

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